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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

DECORATING FINE PORCELAIN.

By ENID E. BENNETT.

Number Two.



THE best materials procurable should always be purchased by the china painter. It is advisable to pay very particular attention to the grade of brushes, paints and oils selected, as with proper care they will last a long time. It is also essential to have everything as conveniently arranged as possible for painting when doing fine work, which requires the undivided attention of the decorator. While not strictly necessary a china painter's chest or cabinet will be found very useful. This may be procured in mahogany or other wood and consists of a number of small drawers in a case, suitable for containing, palette, brushes and the various requisites of the decorator's outfit, and keeping them free from dust.

The floating particles in the atmosphere attach themselves so readily to moist color, which settles around them—often leaving spots when fired—that it is necessary to work in a room as free from dust as possible. For this reason, one with a painted floor or simply covered with matting, is often preferred for ceramic painting, in place of a studio with draperies, rugs and the usual accompaniments. The use of a needle set in a rubber handle is of great assistance in removing any atoms of lint or dust which may settle upon the work.

A covered china palette containing twenty or more recesses is most convenient for mixing the paints. By this method the palette may be filled with the different colors so prepared as to be always ready for use. Begin with the yellows and squeeze from the tube sufficient paint to about fill one of the recesses. Place each in its own receptacle and follow with the reds, and other colors you will be likely to use most. Into each color put a drop or two of oil of cloves, and stir well together with an ivory point, or trace. Add the same of essence grasse, and incorporate all by stirring briskly. Wipe the ivory tracer carefully before using again. In working take out a little of whatever paint may be required using the inside of the cover as the palette for mixing the tints.

The process is an excellent one, but it must be remembered to stir the colors well every day before using them. Thin the paints with a little spirits of turpentine, after the brush has been touched in clove oil. In decorating china one usually desires that some portion of the ware should be tinted. This is not at all difficult to accomplish successfully with a proper degree of care in working. There are persons who advocate depending somewhat upon the fixing to remedy imperfect tinting, but while it may in a measure smooth over blemishes, the work will remain defective and unsatisfactory, and it is in every case best to have the tint without a fault or spot before sending it to the kiln.

Both the colors in powder and in tubes may be used for this purposed.

In preparing the latter it is simply necessary to add a drop or two of clove oil, or a little balsam of copaiba to keep them from drying too rapidly, and then dilute the mixture with spirits of turpentine.

Flux may be added though many persons dispense with it entirely.

For the powder colors mix with fat oil to form a thick paste. First rub down the powder with about one fourth flux, and a little spirits of turpentine on a glass slab with a muller, and when perfectly smooth rub in the fat oil, and a drop or two of oil of cloves; this may be thinned with either oil of lavender, or spirits of turpentine, and should give if well fired a surface as smooth and finished as glass. Sufficient color should be prepared at one time to cover the entire surface to be tinted, as any delay would necessitate doing it all over from the beginning. Two or three blenders should be at hand, that if one becomes too moist another may be substituted at once. The blending brush may be used, though pounces made by tying a ball of cotton in a piece of soft silk, or cambric, (such as an old handkerchief will afford)—answer every purpose. A broad flat brush well charged with the color, should be used in laying the ground, and with rapid strokes the tint may be smoothly painted in. Using the blenders and pouncing with a light even touch the uniform tone required will be obtained.

A few moments should be allowed for the oils to dry slightly, before beginning to blend the tint. When it is perfectly satisfactory the porcelain should be set aside where it will be protected from dust and the tinting allowed to thoroughly dry. The finest work is usually done by giving the ware a separate firing for the painting, and the tint. An excellent plan is to first decorate the article with the design chosen, and after firing add the color desired for the ground. This prevents the tedious

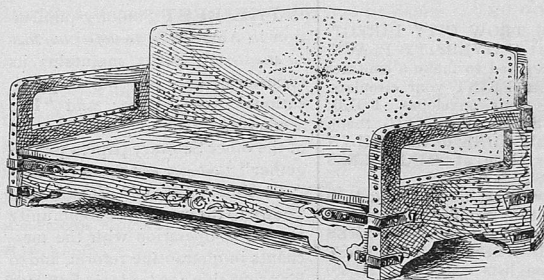
process of erasing the tinting from the space to be painted upon. This may be done, however, if desired, by means of "stopping out" mixtures, or by scratching off the color, and going carefully over the design with a bit of cloth moistened with turpentine. There is quite an advantage in giving an article two firings, namely, that it enables the decorator to finish the work more delicately by retouching any parts which may be benefitted by the added attention. One can also paint much faster and with more freedom than when in danger of marring the ground by careless handling. One of the latest styles in desert plates is shown with plain centers of a pale tint and elaborately decorated borders in gold on a dark ground.

This is peculiarly handsome and effective. The set is divided into six tints; blue, pink, gray, yellow, a delicate green and salmon. The dark border should be first laid in and fired, and it will then be ready for the tinting and the gold. After the center is perfectly hard and dry the design in gold can be painted on the border without difficulty. Brown forms are exceedingly good background for a decoration of this character. The process of laying in a dark color is, however, not the same as that employed in tinting. For this purpose a preparation called ground laying oil, is first painted very smoothly over the border of the plate, and gently pounced with one of the blenders already described.

Then a large camels hair blending brush should be filled with the dry powder color, and dusted over the surface distributing evenly over the whole, covering the oil entirely with a coating of the powder.

Surplus color should be blown off lightly. It may in the first instance be necessary to thin the ground laying oil with a little turpentine, in order to attain a consistency that will paint in well. After firing the gold may be applied over the dark ground in as elaborate manner as desired. Tube colors used in painting are also good for tinting, but there are a number of pigments especially prepared for grounds which are not to be used otherwise.

Various effective backgrounds may be made with a little practice. When a soft mottled or clouded one is preferred it can be accomplished by means of the pounce. Charge this with



The hall settee shown herewith was made in carved oak. The covering is of leather, the patterns being defined by wrought nails. The bolt heads show at the joining of the arms, the clamps being made of wrought iron.

the paint upon the palette which has been mixed with a little clove oil, and thinned with turpentine. Give the surface a good irregular dabbing, placing but a slight degree of color in the lighter portions, and blending them gradually into dark tones, by applying more of the paint.

A broken effect showing marks of the brush is given by preparing the paint in the ordinary way, and putting it in with a large brush without blending.

Sometimes a combination of several colors is desired, as from a light yellow green to black green, or from deep red brown to iron violet, or deep blue green, and black may be used together. Paint in the colors and then blend. A size made of finely powdered chalk and a solution of gum is excellent for covering a design, previous to tinting in sketchy work, where one firing is to be given. After the tint is perfectly dry the ware may be subjected to the action of water, or the chalk moistened sufficiently to cause it to be easily removed without injury to the surrounding color. A solid dead gold background is very handsome; this may be dusted in, or laid in with a blending brush.

These different styles of decorative grounds may be appropriately used to produce the finest effects, as the taste of the amateur, and the use of the article to be embellished shall suggest. In another paper may be given the method of using jewels, (a notable example of which was seen in the King Ludwig porcelain), and also the process of applying crystal pearl covering on vases and fancy pieces where a rich frosted appearance is sometimes desired.

The DECORATOR AND FURNISHER for January maintains its peculiar and general interest. It has a large number of artistic designs in black and white and in tints, in many kinds of work to cultivate home taste and home art.—*Boston Globe.*